

The Visitor

DECEMBER 2025

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 108 Issue 11

A Publication of St. John's United Church of Christ

A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

We are preparing to enter the Season of Advent beginning on Sunday, November 30, 2025. During the four Sundays of Advent, we will set aside a time to light our Advent candles. There are five candles in our Advent Wreath. The four to be lit on the Sundays preceding Christmas symbolize: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

On Christmas Eve we will light all the candles including the large one which symbolizes Christ. Please plan to be with us during this time of anticipation and celebration of Christ's coming to us.

To help with your daily devotions during this time of the year, I have included below Scripture Readings to be used throughout the week based on the Lectionary. My sincere hope is that you may benefit from these readings and that they make your preparation of the coming Christ Child meaningful and relevant.

Week One: November 30-December 6

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44.

Week Two: December 7-13

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Mark 3:1-12.

Week Three: December 14-20

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 46:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11.

Week Four: December 21-27

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-15.

Christmas Eve: December 24

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14

Christmas Day: December 25

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14.

Advent Prayer:

God, you are master of both light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We, who have so much to do, seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We, who are anxious over many things, look forward to your coming among us.

We, who are blessed in so many ways, long for the complete joy of your reign.

We, whose hearts are heavy, seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come!" Amen.

Merry Christmas to each one of you! May these days and all your days be full of love, beauty and meaning; and may the Holy Spirit be in and through all those moments. Let us give thanks for the wonder and miracle of the Incarnation – “the word made flesh”, and may new wonders and miracles be yours this season and all through 2026.

Continue to share the faith - see you in church!

Pastor Marty

PRAYER MINISTRY-DECEMBER BLESSINGS

Christmas is:

A time of remembering, a time of loving,

A time of giving, a time of believing.

A time of gratitude, a time to slow down.

A time of peace and a time of hope.

Kindness is free

Sprinkle it everywhere.

Wishing you the Spirit of Christmas

Which is Peace.

The blessing of Christmas

Which is Hope.

From the heart of Christmas

Which is Christ.



Practice the Pause

When in doubt, pause.

When angry, pause.

When tired, pause.

When stressed, pause.

And whenever you pause, PRAY.

Season of Advent

November 30, December 7, December 14, December 21

Each week we will light the Advent Candles remembering the themes of: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. During these four Sundays we will be singing Advent hymns and Christmas Carols. There will be special music throughout the season from our musicians and singers.



Christmas Season

The Christmas Season begins on Wednesday, December 24th when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Join us at 7:00 pm for our candle light Christmas Eve Service with communion.

Upcoming Events at St. John's

Sunday, November 30th:

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 6th:

7:00 p.m. Choral Christmas Concert at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 7th:

10:00 a.m. Communion Sunday/Second Sunday of Advent

Last Day for Gifts to the Manger for Washington UCC

Thursday, December 11th:

9:00 a.m.-Noon Food Pantry

Sunday, December 14th:

10:00 a.m. Third Sunday of Advent

11:30 a.m.-Lunch Bunch– Holiday Luncheon Fellowship Hall -All Are Welcome

Sunday, December 21st:

10:00 a.m. Fourth Sunday of Advent

7:00 p.m. Choral Christmas Concert

Wednesday, December 24th:

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, December 25th & Friday, December 26th

Church Office Closed

Saturday, December 6th, 13th, 20th

10am-11am Pause for Advent Discussion Group

Thursday, January 1st & Friday, January 2nd

Church Office Closed

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Mark your calendars now!! Our annual Choral Christmas Concert will be coming once again in December!

This year we are excited to be doing something a little bit different. We will be joining with the choir of Gloria Dei Lutheran church in Lakeside Park to present the concert. Both choirs are busy rehearsing the music.

On **Saturday evening December 6th at 7pm**, we will present the concert at Gloria Dei under the direction of their director, Houston Tyrrell. On **Sunday evening December 21st at 7pm**, we will present the concert here at St. John's, under the direction of our own director, Tony Burdette.



The main portion of the concert will be the cantata by Mary McDonald entitled "Festival of Christmas". Other selections will be sung, including the Hallelujah Chorus by G.F. Handel. The choirs will be accompanied by an orchestra.

We hope you will plan to be with us here at **St. John's** on **Sunday, December 21st** to experience beautiful music for your holiday enjoyment. The concert at both churches will be followed by a fun holiday reception.

THE 2025 ANNUAL VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TOUR

Saturday, December 6th &
Sunday, December 7th, 2025
12pm - 6pm

The Annual East Row Victorian Christmas Tour is returning on the first full weekend in December in the East Row Historic District of Newport, Kentucky, this time for our 31st year! Once again, residents will be opening their spectacular historic homes to the public, just in time for the Christmas season. We will have 8 distinct homes scattered around the Historic District, each with a unique character sure to delight visitors. Tour hours each day will be from 12pm to 6pm this year.



DARKNESS THEN LIGHT

Advent 2025. Please consider joining a weekly discussion group during Advent season. This year we will be using the Advent devotional book titled *"Darkness then Light"*. The book is a 4 week guide with 25 devotions leading to the birth of Christ. Each devotion focuses on a different theme in scripture. Also included are weekly reflections that enhance group discussion and individual meditation, both providing a rich, thoughtful experience.



The group will meet in the church parlor on **Saturday December 6th, 13th, and 20th, from 10:00 - 11:00 am.** A closing discussion, optional and to be determined, will meet after Christmas day.

A free book is available to the first 10 folks who sign up for the discussion group. Others may purchase the book from Christianitytoday.com for a reasonable price.

If you are interested in joining the group please contact Laura Haas (859-240-9807). All are welcome, church members, family and friends. If you have questions please reach out to Laura.

LUNCH BUNCH

A "LUNCH BUNCH" sponsored EVENT

Pre- Christmas Luncheon

Sunday - December 14th - 11:30 AM Fellowship Hall

Baked Ham and Drinks provided by Lunch Bunch

Reservation Forms in Sunday Bulletin

Sign-up Sheets to share your favorite side/dessert at front and side entrances.

ALL ARE WELCOME!!!!

Come and enjoy food, fellowship and a Christmas Song Sing-Along!!



CALL FOR COOKIES

If you or anyone you know has a special cookie recipe you would like to showcase, we would love for you to include it in the Christmas Concert Reception. The Choir is looking for cookies for their reception after the concert on Sunday, December 21st. Cookies can be dropped off during church office hours or before the concert. Contact the church office with any questions (859) 431-1818 Option 3.



HENRY HOSEA HOUSE VOLUNTEERES

On Friday, October 31st 8 volunteers from St. John's volunteered their time at the Henry Hosea House in Newport to serve meals to 110 individuals. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers on a successful mission event. Mark your calendar because the next volunteer event for the Hosea House will be **Friday, January 30, 2026**. Hope to see you there!



Left to Right: David & Diana Stamm, Karen Liden, Doug & Julie Ollier, Karen Kiefer, Pat Goins & Mike Hanson



WASHINGTON UCC GIVING TREE



It's that time of year again when we collect items for our Christmas Giving Tree for Washington UCC. This year they are requesting that we focus our giving on hats, scarves, gloves, and blankets, all sizes. They ran out of these items last Christmas and feel this is their biggest need for this year. Monetary donations will also be accepted, and Washington UCC will do the shopping. There will be baskets at each door for you to place your donations in, and remember not to wrap them. The last day for collecting will be **Sunday, December 7th**.

THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE AND FOOD PANTRY

On Sunday, November 9th during worship, we blessed the food that our members collected for this year's Thanksgiving baskets. This month we provided Thanksgiving Baskets to benefit families coming to the church's Food Pantry. The Food Pantry generously donated canned corn, green beans, gravy, and sweet potatoes to the baskets. The congregation brought in other food items such as boxed mashed potatoes, boxed stuffing, boxed desserts, cornbread mix and cranberry sauce to help complete the baskets.

On Thursday, November 13th our faithful Food Pantry volunteers distributed food to needy folks in our community to insure that they have a blessed Thanksgiving holiday. In addition to the bags of food, our church also gave each family a \$50 certificate to get a turkey for their dinner. We thank our volunteers for always being ready to help with this important mission to our community.



“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”
Romans 12:13



Left to Right: Carol Fickenscher, Karen Schofield, Mike Hanson, Wendy Bauer, Rose Wendling & John Robson

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

St. John's was lucky to have some ghouls stop by and hand out candy to the local trick-or-treaters on Halloween night. Thanks to Julie and Doug Ollier and Carol Fickenscher who helped the kids of Newport have a Happy Halloween!



BUILDINGS & GROUNDS CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

On Sunday, November 9th St. John's had a "Celebration Luncheon" to celebrate reaching our \$25,000 milestone for our Buildings and Grounds Campaign. The congregation was served a delicious meal of salad and rolls, lasagna, cheese bread and cake for dessert. The meal was prepared and served by members of our Leadership Team to show their appreciation. Our Leadership Team made beautiful holiday baskets to raffle off to all who attended. Thank you to everyone at St. John's for your hard work in achieving this goal and to the Leadership Team for all of their hard work!



THANK YOU NOTE FROM JOHN & ELIZABETH ROBSON

Elizabeth and I thank the good folks of St. John's for caring for us. We, in our own prayer time, feel those of the disciples of St. John's. And the gift cards to Mr. Kroger and Ms. Panera are welcome. Soups have become a mainstay for us. Peace this very Food Pantry Day.
John Robson



NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2025

If you would like to submit an article or receive *The Visitor* via email please contact StJohnsUCC@StJohnsUCCNewport.org.

You may also visit the "News" heading on our website and fill out the appropriate form.



A digital copy of *The Visitor* can be accessed at our website: StJohnsUCCNewport.org under our "News Section."

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

On Sunday, November 2, 2025 during our All Saint's Sunday Service, St. John's remembered the names of our members and friends who entered into glory this past year. The service was filled with joyous hymns, an inspirational message from Pastor Marty and the lighting of candles in remembrance of those we lost. Below are the names of those individuals:

Philip Hamilton November 14, 2024
George Budig December 16, 2024
Linda Zigos January 19, 2025
Barbara Coppage February 4, 2025
Jerry Robert Pettus June 8, 2025
Horst Maass June 24, 2025
Robert Gray July 21, 2025
Melvin Hanson July 23, 2025
Albert Nutgrass August 9, 2025
Marilyn Hanson August 22, 2025
Norma Biery September 29, 2025
Yvonne Daniels October 3, 2025
Gary Hogue October 26, 2025



2026 CHURCH DIRECTORIES AND 2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Beginning the week of December 7th the 2026 Church Directories and 2026 Offering Envelopes will be available in the hallway by the church office. If you do not find a set of offering envelopes and would like one, please contact Kelli in the church office and she will prepare a set for you (859)-431-1818 Option 3 or kelli.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org.



December Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

December 1st: Pam Schierberg
December 4th: Barbara Boyers
December 7th: Patty Patterson
December 8th: Mike Scharber
December 9th: Ralph Schoulthies
December 15th: Karen Schofield & Janet Wendel
December 18th: Eric Haas
December 21st: John Westlund
December 25th: Betty Webster



December Anniversaries

December 2nd: Gary & Patty Wagner (7 years)
December 6th: Mike & Brenda Scharber (56 years)
December 29th: Richard & Patricia Paden (51 years)



St. John's would like to wish a happy birthday and happy anniversary to our friends and family celebrating during the month of December!

DECEMBER HOMEBOUND MEMBER OF THE WEEK

We would like to celebrate and honor our homebound members of the week for the month of December. We appreciate and celebrate these individuals as our members of the week!

December 7th: Robert Hasse
December 14th: John Westlund-Birthday December 21st
December 21st: Betty Webster-Birthday December 25th
December 28th: Carol Strong-Birthday January 1st

LIVE STREAMING. Join us Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on our church Facebook page to join our service live as it happens. The service will be available to watch at any time on our Facebook page and will be uploaded to our YouTube page and website. We hope you can join us for worship in any format that works for you.



St. John's UCC website <https://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org>

St John's UCC YouTube Channel
St. John's Newport UCC

St. John's UCC Facebook Page
St. John's UCC Newport



POINSETTIAS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON!



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 – WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Order your poinsettias to add beauty to our Chance! Orders must be turned in by **Sunday, December 7**. The Poinsettias will be red, in a 6" pot wrapped in green foil, \$12/each. Place this form with check, payable to St. John's UCC, or cash in an envelope.

The plants are yours to take home after December 24, Christmas Eve Service.

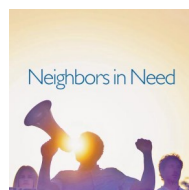
I would like to order _____ Poinsettias.

Signature _____ Envelope Number: _____



NEIGHBORS IN NEED

On Sunday, October 5th St. John's participated in the Neighbors in Need campaign for the United Church of Christ. St. John's contributed \$476.00 to this worthy cause. Thank you St. John's for your support.



Executive Director

Karen Class

Crestview Hills Director

Camille Cates

Falmouth Director

Shannon Wells

Covington Director

Angie Helvy

Vevay Director

Tasha Rose

SRA Program Director

Maria Specht

Nurse Manager

Jenna Hughes, RN

Medical Director

John E. White, MD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS**Chairman**

Jack Westwood

Vice Chairwoman

Linda Gray, RN

Secretary

Amy Arlinghaus, RN

Treasurer

Kevin Bard

Board Members

Rev. Abram Crozier

Mina "Mike" Kalfas, MD

Rev. Peter LaRuffa

Kathy Zembrodt



New Hope

Pregnancy Center



November 3, 2025

Dear St. John Church of Christ,

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, church family, for participating in our 2025 Baby Bottle Boomerang! We are so very blessed by your generous gifts totaling \$696.14. Your generosity enables us to meet the needs of women and men in our community by offering all our services -- pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting education, and material assistance -- at no cost to our clients. We are also able to continue sharing the important message of abstinence with students at local middle and high schools.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU! Did you know you can refer people to New Hope Center for free baby items and pregnancy services? We know people turn to churches when they need something, so send them our way! Studies have shown that many women seeking abortion or who have had a past abortion are regularly attending church. We want to be a trusted resource to provide help and healing for those who are left hurting from a past abortion decision. Let us help them find the help and healing they need.

We would love to have you come visit and see for yourself what we do! To schedule a tour of one of your local New Hope Center, or if you want additional info, reach out to Tori Weisz, our Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, at 859-341-0767 or tweisz@newhopecenter.com. We would also love to provide you with helpful resources to promote New Hope Center within your church, small groups, youth groups, women's ministry, etc.

We are so excited to see all that God is doing at New Hope Center this year at each of our 4 locations. Your church family is an integral part of the difference we are making for LIFE in our communities, so thank you for your investment in the work of New Hope Center!

May God Richly Bless You,

Karen Class

*Thank you
for supporting
life!
Blessings*

CRESTVIEW HILLS, KY
228 Thomas More Parkway
Crestview Hills, KY 41017
859-341-0766

COVINGTON, KY
2501 Madison Ave.
Covington, KY 41014
859-431-0011

FALMOUTH, KY
707 W. Shelby Street
Falmouth, KY 41040
859-448-5868

VEVAY, IN - NEW
213 W. Main Street
Vevay, IN 47043
812-964-5929